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READING COMPETENCE
LITERATURE IN ENGLISH:
A TERMINAL CASES

By

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INTRODUCTION

This paper starts from the proposition that, if utilised properly, Literature is an invaluable aid to the teaching of language in addition to being an integral part of the educational process as a whole. However what has happened in Tanzania is that literature has been brutally clubbed to death by a whole crowd of murderers. Then instead of indicting the murderers we have indicted literature for agreeing to be murdered. When Tanzania produced her first literature syllabuses in 1973, curriculum developers were confident that literature would play a vital part in the development of English language teaching as well as in the development of new Tanzanian men and women conscious and committed to the building of a socialist and self-reliant Tanzania. Now these syllabuses are in shreds and the noble ideals unattainable. This paper intends to assess what went wrong, "where the rain began to beat us," why the syllabuses failed to achieve their goals and, on the basis of this assessment, to give some suggestions on how a resurrection might be induced so that literature can play its proper role once more.

The rationale for teaching Literature

It is worth looking briefly first at the rationale for teaching literature in Tanzanian schools at all. A good summary of the importance of literature was provided by a conference of teachers of literature in Kenya in 1973.

"In history literature has always been a powerful instrument in evolving the cultural ethos of a people. It has been a basis for socialising and indeed anchoring a deep realisation of the people's image of themselves. The nature and character of the consciousness thus developed ultimately determines the nature and character of the nation we are in process of building."¹

The quotation underlines two basic points; the central importance of literature in the life and consciousness of the nation and, arising from that the need to consider carefully the nature of the literature being presented to our children in schools. The original struggles in the late 1960's and early 1970's were to ensure that what was being presented to our children was relevant to their needs and concerns and growth of national consciousness as a whole. Achebe commented about African writers.

"It is clear to me that an African creative writer who tries to avoid the big social and political issues of contemporary Africa will end up being completely irrelevant like that absurd man in the proverb who leaves his house burning to pursue a rat fleeing from the flames."²

The same comment could be applied to African syllabus writers. If relevant texts were chosen, they could play a valid educational role in a way which no other subject on the curriculum could. Literary texts by their nature, provide concrete settings, situations, characters, conflicts

and behaviours which enable the readers or students to understand themselves and their societies in concrete ways rather than through the discussion of abstract theories, and the more powerfully the writer has been able to see and to present his vision and experience through the use of language, the more literature can contribute. Literature not only reflects life but presents new viewpoints new ways of seeing life, of evaluating and exposing ideas and theories in the crucible of practice. Thus literature becomes a passionate subject of thought and debate.

These arguments are inevitably sketchy since they are not the main concern of this paper but they need to be always borne in mind because they underlie both the strengths and the weaknesses of literature as a part of language teaching and they provide an explanation for the deliberate marginalisation of literature over the past sixteen years.

The Rationale for Literature in Language Teaching

Traditionally, it was assumed that exposing learners of English to the classics of English literature, quite apart from inculcating British culture into whichever natives came to hand, was the best way of teaching language. This unscientific, but ideologically attractive belief went largely unchallenged until the second half of this century when English language teachers began to demand more 'authentic' English as it was spoken and written by the majority of contemporary native speakers.

As a consequence, literature teaching began to disappear from the 'language' classroom to be replaced by a surrogate literature, commonly in the form of textbook dialogues and short tales, where learners were presented with the appearance of literature in the form of text devised to carry structure but with none of its literary effect.³

Language teaching became 'scientific', raced the theories of Skinner and concentrated on structural and technical approaches. Thus the emphasis was on discrete point teaching, correctness in grammatical form and the repetition of a range of graded structures and lexis.⁴ Learners were supposed to be controlled or programmed in acquiring the language in situations where they were protected from making mistakes or going outside the laid down path to linguistic competence. Long comments on this:

While language teaching was going through a mechanistic phase reducing itself to formulas and forgetting its purpose as message' there was hardly a place for literature.⁵

These approaches, no doubt, played a valuable part in breaking down the culturally imperialist assumptions of previous syllabuses, and in redirecting the vision to English as it was actually used. However it coincided very neatly with the rise of new literatures and new demands which were anti-imperialist and exposed the workings of the British Empire, among others. Thus, quite conveniently, as these new literature emerged, literature was removed from the agenda as being irrelevant to the needs of English learners who were then fed on a diet of English for Special Purposes and what Long called 'surrogate' texts which largely maintained the hegemony of British culture.

However, the contradictions within the structural approaches soon became apparent as any Tanzanian teacher can testify. Students are masters of each discrete point but cannot speak or write English. Thus a new emphasis began to be placed on communicative syllabuses for communicative competence. At this point, literature was able to raise head once more since the chief advantage of literature is that it provides

an authentic text which demands and deserves a response. The flat, one-dimensional fabricated texts which were created to provide good examples of structure use, and sometimes authentic language remained mere example, inviting repetition, imitation and the production of similar phrases only. They could not really stimulate further questioning and language enquiry in the way that a literary text could. Secondly, extended literary texts such as short stories, novels and drama provides a wide variety of language use, styles, registers within different authentic contexts such exposing the learners to English as communication. Thirdly, literature teaching favours group activities, discussions and learner to learner interaction based on or around a text, which is precisely the approach favoured by communicative language teaching. Fourthly, literature teaching provides a whole range of creative linguistic activities such as prediction, creating a scenario, looking at or rewriting the text from different 'point of view' etc which can give learners of English a feel for the language as a whole in ways which can not be achieved by more mechanistic approaches. Lastly, though this is by no means the least important, well chosen literary texts provide a high level of motivation, interest and enjoyment in the learners which is essential for achieving linguistic competence.

Thus to sum up, in structural syllabuses, little rationale for literature exists but the more the emphasis is placed on communicative competence, the more scope exists for the use of literature in teaching language.

However, this begs one basic question: literature can only be an effective aid to language teaching when a certain minimum linguistic competence has been reached.

As Brumfit and Carter state in their introduction:

"The key criterion for a literature course is whether the books on the syllabus are accessible for serious discussion and personal experience to a particular group of students. Discussion is not a way of learning to read a book; it is something which analyses an experience already achieved, at least in part. So we need to select texts to which students can respond immediately without the mediation of the teacher."⁶

In the context of Tanzania over the last few years, this has frequently not been the case. We have literature syllabuses, above, all language III which, as shown by numerous researchers,⁷ are beyond the linguistic competence of the majority of Tanzanian learners in secondary schools. If this is the case, what went wrong, and what is the point of clinging on to literature at all? At this point, a brief historical review of literature in Tanzania is required. This will show the wide range of external and internal influences on what might otherwise be considered a technical question.

Historical Review

Up to 1968, Tanzania used the Cambridge syllabuses whose primary concern was for English literary history, Shakespeare and major British authors, not the relevance of such works to the needs of Tanzanians. The examination concentrated on context questions demanding a rigorous knowledge of the texts in minute detail.

In 1965 a conference of East African School and University Teachers of Literature held in Dar es Salaam worked out a

new syllabus which became very largely the syllabus for the Cambridge Overseas Examination Certificate in East Africa. This new syllabus showed a greater concern for the choice of relevant text and now accepted in translation major European writers, such as Voltaire, Ibsen and Brecht, as well as African writers. Thus the subject was now called Literature in English. However, these changes were largely expatriate inspired and controlled and consisted of rather grudging acceptance to move a few metres in order to avoid a collision. Between 1968 and 1972, out of fifty seven drama texts studied at EAACE level only one was African.⁸ For novels the situation was slightly better with two or three African novels set on average every year. The syllabus remained Eurocentric based on the belief in the superiority and primacy of European culture.

Needless to say such minor changes did not satisfy the more radical and nationalist educationalists and literature teachers. In 1969 a conference of teachers of literature in English adopted a proposal for a new literature syllabus to be called African Literature. This proposal was written by a committee of four chosen by the conference. The proposal is worth quoting in length as it shows the thinking of the time and also anticipates very largely the syllabuses of 1973.

In view of the unique revolutionary situation in present-day Tanzania, and in view of the faith we maintain in the power of the study of literature to develop maturity of thought and breadth of vision, we offer a new syllabus for the secondary school called AFRICAN LITERATURE.

This study of African literature should begin the Swahili classes of Forms I and II with the collection and study of songs, poems, stories and legends from the students own milieu...

Ideally in Forms III and IV the study of written African Literature will continue. All students in schools in Forms III and IV should be offered this course because of its basic relation to the revolutionary change of education in Tanzania. Students in the science stream have the same human need for personal maturity and appreciation of their own African values as do students of arts.

The 'unique revolutionary situation' was, of course, that created by the Arusha Declaration and its aftermath. As in other spheres, this gave far greater impetus and momentum to the more radical demands. Thus, unlike in Kenya where radical demands for reform, spearheaded by Ngugi wa Thiong'o were snuffed out by the political administrative elite and their expatriate advisers,¹⁰ in Tanzania the pressure for reform was so great that even the civil servants and their advisers were convinced, willingly or unwillingly of the need for change, a fact facilitated by Tanzania's decision in 1971 to offer its own examinations. The more willing side was expressed by C. Brumfit who was then chairman of the Literature Panel. Taking Nyerere's article on Education for Self-Reliance as his starting point he tried to rethink the literature syllabuses so that they would contribute to Tanzanian development by encouraging in learners a commitment to serving the community, enquiring and critical minds and a cooperative approach. In order to achieve this it was essential to concentrate on works which spoke directly to the concerns of the learners and did not need long explanations of unfamiliar cultural backgrounds. Thus inevitably African Literature would be foregrounded.¹¹

Brumfit and others also rejected the previous syllabuses on the grounds of their narrow and restricted nature. They wished to encourage a wide reading of literature so that by the time they finished school, learners would have had sufficient exposure to literature to be able to assess other

works and put them within a context of literature as a whole. Hence Brumfit, Killam and others began to suggest a thematic approach to literature.¹²

Much more could still be said about the debate on literature at the time but for purposes of this paper the important points to notice are the almost universal acceptance of the need for an Afrocentric syllabus and the overwhelming concern with the content of literature syllabuses. At this stage although Brumfit does talk of how languages makes its effect in literature he and all the others are concerned above all with what is to be taught. It was assumed that the linguistic and literary skills would arise automatically out of the relevant content. This was particularly true at the lower levels. As Brumfit says.

At school certificate level we are largely concerned with literature as an expression of human problems and at high school certificate also with the language means used to express the problems.¹³

This pressure for change in the content of the syllabuses bore fruit in the 1973 syllabuses which reflected very clearly the primary concerns of the time. In the introduction to the aims of teaching literature it is stated:

Literature can be an effective tools for teaching political thought and for stimulating social action because, through stories, plays and songs it is able to dramatise reality.

and the specific aims included:

1. to make a critical analysis of culture
2. to recapture and maintain our dignity in the African context
3. to recognise the use of literature as an instrument of social change and to use it in this way.¹⁴

In order to achieve this, the syllabus tried to integrate itself with both Fasihi in Kiswahili and the English Language syllabus. Thus, in their scheme, Literature I and II consisted of the Fasihi periods in Forms One and Two. Literature III was allocated two out of the six English language periods and was above all an extensive reading course. Literature IV was an optional subject for arts students and literature V was the A level literature syllabus, literature VI was the Fasihi component of A level Swahili. Secondly, with the exception of literature IV the syllabuses adopted the thematic approach.

Thus the 1973 syllabuses were revolutionary in their intentions and scope. They aimed at opening a new chapter in the teaching of literature in Tanzania, and to a surprisingly large extent they succeeded. However, the syllabuses fell victims to their own contradictions and to other contradictions external to them.

Internal Contradictions

Firstly it was hastily and therefore insufficiently prepared. This led to the inclusion of texts which had not even been read by the syllabus writers such as Hadithi which was a history book and had nothing to do with stories or literature at all. The stress on content also led to a later rejection of several of the earlier texts such as Efuru, Rebel and No Easy Task which were poorly written and

shallow. Language teachers were not prepared for the teaching of Literature III. Thus the inclusion of the Literature III component resembled a forced marriage in which neither in-laws (ie. the language and Literature teachers) were prepared to cooperate. First of all, language teachers refused to teach Literature III on the ground that it was Literature. In order to appease them, Literature was renamed Language III a hybrid name which reflected the confusions of the time. It was stressed that Language III was an extensive reading and comprehension course, which could and should be used as the basis for the whole O level course, except for the teaching of specific structure points. No seminars were held at all except one brief weekend regional seminar for each region in 1973 and a national seminar for literature teachers directed mainly at Form VI in 1974. Very few materials were produced apart from Looking Together series which was shallow and insufficient. Thus the attempt to integrate with language teaching was artificial in that it had not been prepared for in any way and thus it never succeeded despite the valiant efforts of teachers in different parts of the country. Things were so bad in many schools that language teachers refused point blank to teach the course thereby splitting English classes in Form III and IV into three periods of language and two periods of Language III which negated the whole aim of the course.

The attempt to integrate with Fasihi was also artificial. The idea of building on the skills and knowledge gained Fasihi in Forms I and II was laudable but the integration of Fasihi into the literature syllabuses smacked of empire-building since Fasihi also has its own programmes for Forms III, IV and V, a fact which the literature syllabuses did not like to recognise to the extent that it could be argued that literature was trying to usurp the place of Fasihi

which was far better equipped to fulfil the goals laid out in the syllabus.

However, at the level of content, the syllabus were very successful. They broke down the narrow and formalist syllabuses of the past and introduced fresh air into the teaching of literature. The students embraced the courses which became hotbeds of social and political discussion centred around the texts and the courses gave birth to student literary journals such as TAA BORA, the Mzumbe Literature workshops, and many of the young contemporary writers such Mwakyembe, Kajubi and Ngozi acknowledge their debt to these new syllabuses. The only book of Tanzanian poetry written in English was a direct product of the syllabus since it was mainly by Form VI students together with their teacher.¹⁵ Thus the internal pressures.

Economic Climate

The formation of these new syllabuses coincided with the steady reduction of funding for education in general, especially secondary education. Thus within the following five years, no money was allocated for seminars, the literature panel sickened and died and little money was made available to purchase the texts required. This later combined with the foreign exchange crisis which meant that the books were not even imported with the result that an extensive reading programme in some schools was being taught with one copy of one text for four streams. Inevitably the reading aspect of the course disappeared. It became a question of cramming dictated notes in order to pass the examination. However, some of the latter day critics of the situation should not forget that such a situation is not so dissimilar to the previous one where students could pass the Shakespeare exam by cramming the critics without any real understanding of or response to the text.

English were regarded as teachers of 'kasumba'. Such attitudes, of course, were precisely the ones which the new syllabuses had tried unsuccessfully to forestall and counter.

These opponents were frequently joined, at least superficially, by those who were afraid of the critical nature of the syllabus. Brumfit in 1970 correctly stated:

I do not think our course is possible at all if we are not certain that the country wants creative and independent thinkers.¹⁶

and there were times in the 1970's when literature teachers began to wonder if such Thinkers were wanted.

The first attack came from the religious establishment which took advantage of the issue of dirty books to start a campaign against Houseboy, Mission to Kala and The Poor Christ of Bomba. While it is true that all these three works talk about sex in an open fashion, they are not the only ones and it is even more true that they present a powerful exposure of Christian hypocrisy. Thus the campaign against them was started by a missionary on the day of the relevant panel meeting, the panel was packed with non-members consisting of pastors, priests and self appointed representative of the parents of Tanzania. The Ministry representative who normally never attended meetings also put in an appearance. After achieving two-thirds of their goal by removing both Beti books and a few others from the bargain, they all disappeared whence they came leaving the panel to deal with other business. Similar pressure would have been put on Song of Lawino but for the fact that it had been recommended at the highest levels of government. At the same time, many seminaries dropped literature at A

In addition, owing to the economic constraints, it proved impossible to change either the structure of the courses or the texts to be studied. The removal of any text from the syllabus would unfairly penalise those schools which were using that text since they could not hope to find a replacement. Thus a syllabus which was supposed to be fluid, and adaptable became rigidified and static to the point where it became fossilised. Therefore the thematic approach or Language III and the stress on extensive reading played an important role in 1973. However, by 1989 it had become a deadweight on the syllabus encouraging rote learning of notes prepared ten years previously and inhibiting the development of new ideas and approaches. The need for a new A level syllabus in 1979 made it possible to review the thematic approach at that level but this has not been the case for Language III.

Political pressures

Some of the economic problems could have been resolved if a certain political will had existed but literature came in for an unprecedented series of attacks from all angles. In attempting to be in the forefront of change, it became an enemy of all who resisted change, either from ignorance or deliberate design to protect their position. First of all, there were those, including senior politicians, who regarded literature in English as being, by definition, irrelevant at best and cultural imperialism at worst, without realising that the content of the literature had changed. Thus, until recently, literature was not taught in Zanzibar at all. This influenced all spheres of society to the extent that even Bob Marley was regarded as an agent of cultural imperialism, since he sang in English. This coincided with the general attitude to English, as being a colonial language and thus, by extension, teachers of

level, and religious pressure was used to censor some of the poems in Summons.

Pressure from the state was not so apparent, but literature found its base gradually being whittled away by the emphasis on technocratic education. With the introduction of biases in secondary schools, Literature four was completely eliminated from the syllabus at one stroke since circular No. 4 from the Ministry of Education allocated no place to it in the timetable. At the same time, the number of English classes in Form Four was reduced. In 1978 the Minister issued a death warrant for Literature in English at A level demanding instead the introduction of an English language course. Finally the number of schools studying A level literature was reduced to seven only.

All these events might have been coincidental rather than conspiratorial but they all pointed to the disfavour in which literature was held at the time.

Thus the only syllabus that remained largely untouched was Language III. This, however, was being undermined to the point where it could no longer fulfil its original purpose. Originally students were supposed to study four readings from three different themes. This declined to three readings from two themes, in which some of the readings were short stories. As a result, Language III began to resemble the former literature syllabuses in concentrating on a few texts intensively but at the same time with the disadvantage of little language work owing to the nature of the course which talked only of themes. Analysis became mechanical and students were often not encouraged to use the texts as a basis for further enquiry and exploration. Nor was it integrated into the heavily structure-based language syllabuses.

In the meantime the standard of English continued to decline as Kiswahili came into its own as a truly national language so that even the motivation for literature and the ability to cope with it began to decline.

From this we can see that a whole range of attitudes and actions have brought literature and therefore reading competence to their present sorry state: economic constraints, political pressures, its relationship with unfavoured language, the lack of material all made language III and its counterparts an easy target of attack for those whose motives were not necessarily the purest. Thus Cripser and Dodd were able to say in their report:

It is clear that the Language 3 component of the syllabus either needs to be abolished, to be made an optional extra course or drastically revised. We recommend the latter course of action. In any revised course we suggest that the basic objective of the course should be the teaching of English through literature ...

Political ideology should be secondary to the improvement of English Language skills.

Finally they stated that the reading competence of the majority of Tanzanian students was too low to cope with the present texts on the syllabus.¹⁷

These conclusions have a lot of truth in them. However they need to be treated with caution in the light of the historical background presented above. Firstly there are grounds for doubting the ideological base underlying the recommendations. While it is true, as stated above, that the content of the works was a prime criterion in their

choice, it is not true that political ideology is being examined in the CSEE. The texts were chosen for their relevance therefore interest level and the examination questions require a knowledge of the texts and an ability to use that knowledge to answer specific questions on them. Thus the major problem would be the level of the texts and their availability rather than their content. Given the fact that the original readers suggested by Cripser and Dodd contained almost no African works at all and the general resistance to Africanisation of the syllabus manifested in the resistance to similar attempts in Kenya, one suspects that technical arguments are being used partly to camouflage ideological preferences. If it was proved that such texts could be read competently by Tanzanian students there would be nothing wrong with providing support for the Tanzanian syllabus rather than imposing readers which are culturally far less relevant.

Secondly there are reasons for questioning the test used by Cripser and Dodd. The tests were written about cultural environments unfamiliar to Tanzanian students, and the testers decided to cloze every fifth item which made the test appreciably more difficult. In addition, it is not clear how the cloze tests were marked since it is quite possible that some mistakes were due to linguistic incompetence rather than reading incompetence. Thus, if the student wrote "They went in bed" rather than "to bed" this would not show that they have failed to understand the passage they were reading. The tests administered by Roy Campbell and Qorro would seem to be more valid in this respect but even they introduced reading speed as one factor which was something that had not been taught in secondary schools for many years. They admitted that many students failed to complete the tests.

Thirdly the question of standards is a tricky one as all testers have included what can only be bogus secondary schools in their test schools which fail to meet the minimum criteria for even deserving the name of secondary school. Their standards should not be allowed to distort the picture of what secondary school can and should achieve.

Finally the recommendation of Cripser and Dodd that we return to interpreting passage in the examination returns us to precisely the situation that Tanzania strove to break away from and defeats the purpose of an extensive reading programme.

This is not to argue that the problems do not exist. Certainly the majority of students still do not possess the linguistic and literary competence required to cope with the present texts but what is ironic is that at the moment when the possibility of achieving minimum linguistic competence exists, attempts are being made to eradicate the very syllabus which could make use of and develop that linguistic competence. The possibility now exists for two reasons.

- (a) For the first time for fifteen years, supplementary readers are now available in most secondary schools and are being widely read and the most popular ones are precisely those which are culturally familiar and relevant. Thus students have a chance to develop their reading skills in order to be able to cope with the books on the syllabus.
- (b) The number of periods allocated to English has increased from five to eight in most secondary schools.
- (c) Some of the books on the syllabus are now becoming available for the first time.

In addition to this, the interest factor in reading competence has been greatly underrated. At the risk of being personal, no doubt if researchers decided to cloze Mabala the Farmer and Hawa the Bus Driver they might well be able to prove that they are suitable for Form 6 students only but my observation in different parts of the country is that they are being read and enjoyed by a large number of students because students want to read them, they raise their reading competence fast in order to be able to do so.

Therefore, if we are to take advantage of changed conditions for the benefit of English teaching in Tanzania and for the other justifications for teaching literature we should not throw our syllabuses out of the window but rather reevaluate and improve them for the benefit of our students. In order to do this, the following demands need to be met.

- (a) A commitment by the Ministry of Education to creating the conditions necessary for reading competence in literature. The old excuse of "hali ngumu" should no longer be accepted as all that is required is a rearrangement of priorities.

The Ministry should allocate funds for buying textbooks as well as petrol for Ministry cars. It should provide inservice courses for teachers in how to use an extensive reading programme to increase linguistic awareness and competence. It should take deliberate steps to encourage the production of Tanzanian materials such as Readers by identifying and supporting potential writers. A two week workshop for such writers could produce wonders! It should also evaluate and rethink the present syllabuses in the light of changing conditions. This does not mean, as argued by some critics, that we are allowing ourselves to be dictated to by external sources but rather that we are

taking advantage of a situation to improve our own syllabuses. For example, while the thematic approach played a valuable role, it may have outlived its usefulness and is now a restricting force rather than a liberating one. However valid and relevant the themes may be, they limit discussion of the texts to certain narrow lines rather than allowing the teacher to use the text to generate wider and deeper discussion.

- (b) A commitment by external forces to allowing and assisting Tanzania to develop her own syllabuses and materials for the benefit of Tanzania rather than imposing received wisdom from elsewhere. What may be good for Edinburgh or Malaysia is not necessarily good for Tanzania.
- (c) A reevaluation of the place of literature in the Curriculum. The 1973 syllabuses were an attempt to justify and defend the relevance of English in an anti-colonial and socialist-oriented state. Therefore the non-linguistic aspects of literature were highlighted. This may have been largely correct but firstly it tried, wrongly, to usurp the primary role of Kiswahili and secondly the linguistic aspect of literature teaching was completely forgotten. Even at ACSEE level in the 1980's the question of a writer's use of language was totally ignored! At the same time the language component of the CSEE syllabus is highly structure-based and the ACSEE syllabus is a miniature linguistics course. Apart from the literature components, there is little attempt to promote and develop communicative competence.

Such demands may be highly unrealistic but, to return to the original premise of this paper, that literature has a vital linguistic and educational role to play, the time has come to ensure it is given the chance to do just that. This

paper would have like to investigate in more detail how this can be achieved but it was felt important to provide a context first so that debate on the subject can be more informed.

In conclusion, future literature in English syllabuses should review their position in the light of the following:

- (a) The rationale for literature in education as a whole should be increasingly fulfilled by Fasihi katika Kiswahili, including the use of relevant works in translation such as Shetani Msalabani provided that the translations are of a sufficiently high standard. Thus, literature in English should only play the minor and supporting role.
- (b) The rationale for literature in language teaching remains and does not change even when Kiswahili becomes the medium of instruction. It is this aspect that now needs to be given the fullest attention in order to develop reading competence effectively. At the same time, we should never lose sight of the wider educational goals of literature. It has the capacity to arouse, provoke, motivate, and educate the learners for the benefit of language and for the benefit of society as a whole.

FOOTNOTES

- 1 Reported in Lillis, K M Africanising the Schools Literature curriculum in Kenya: A case-study in curriculum dependency.

- 2 Achebe, C Morning Yet on Creation Day
(London: Heinemann: 1977) p 79
- 3 Short, M and Candlin, C Teaching study skills for
English Literature in Brumfit, C J and
Carter, R A Literature and Language Teaching
(Oxford: OUP:1987) p 91.
- 4 Long, M N A feeling for Language: The multiple values
of teaching literature in Brumfit and
Carter p. 43.
- 5 Long P.43.
- 6 Brumfit and Carter P. 32.
- 7 For example Criper, C and Dodd, W A "Report on the
Teaching of the English Language and its Use
as a Medium in Education in Tanzania"
(Dar es Salaam: 1984) and Roy-Campbell, M
and Qorro, M "Survey on the Reading
Competence in English of Secondary School
Students in Tanzania" (Dar es Salaam:1987).
- 8 For those and other details of the previous syllabuses
see Lillis and Brumfit. It is very difficult to locate
such materials in Tanzania. All pre-1973 materials are
not at the Institute of Curriculum Development.
- 9 A Proposal for Literature For I - IV 1969 in Background
Notes for Literature Teaching No. 2 (Dar es Salaam:
1971).
- 10 Lillis
- 11 Brumfit
- 12 Brumfit

- 13 Brumfit
- 14 Studies in Curriculum Development No. 3 (Dar es Salaam: Institute of Education: 1973)
- 15 ed Mabala, R S Summons (Dar es Salaam: Tanzania Publishing House 1982)
- 16 Brumfit P. 240.
- 17 Criper and Dodd
- 18 Campbell and Qorro

ENGLISH VERSUS KISWAHILI IN
TANZANIAN SECONDARY EDUCATION

by

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

The problem of language and education in Tanzania has been under discussion among Tanzanian educators and political authorities for the past twenty years. In the sixties, it was usually assumed that the use of English as a medium of instruction in secondary schools was then a necessary but temporary measure, that by 1974 Kiswahili should have taken over the function (see Second Five Year Development Plan). In the seventies, there were heated discussions at the University of Dar es Salaam and elsewhere on the problems of education vis-a-vis Ujamaa in Tanzania, leading K Hirji to declare, in 1973, that the education system in Tanzania is in shambles." Such discussions, however, rarely touched on the question of language as a factor in the alleged disintegration of the educational system in the country.

In the late 1970's and early 1980's the linguists took over the debate from social scientists and government functionaries. These scholars were almost unanimous in their findings and recommendations.

- (a) They found that very little learning is taking place in secondary school classrooms, mainly because both the teachers and the pupils lack competence in the English language.
- (b) They often recommended the improvement of English teaching as a stop-gap measure pending the